

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-8. (Canceled)

9. (Withdrawn) A method for regulating cold and dehydration regulatory genes in a plant comprising the steps of:

introducing at least one copy of a regulatory gene encoding a protein into a plant;
expressing the binding protein encoded by the regulatory gene; and
using the expressed binding protein to stimulate expression of at least one environmental stress tolerance gene through binding to a DNA regulatory sequence.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Withdrawn) A method for regulating cold and dehydration regulatory genes in a plant comprising the steps of:

introducing DNA encoding a binding protein capable of binding to a DNA regulatory sequence into a plant;
introducing a promoter into a plant which regulates expression of the binding protein;
introducing a DNA regulatory sequence into a plant to which a binding protein can bind; and
introducing one or more environmental stress tolerance genes into a plant whose expression is regulated by a DNA regulatory sequence.

12 – 16. (Canceled)

17. (Withdrawn) Plant material transformed with DNA encoding a cold-regulated transcription factor.
- 18 – 19. (Canceled)
20. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~12~~ 32, wherein said ~~transformation~~ introducing is effected by *Agrobacterium tumerfaciens*.
21. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~12~~ 32, wherein said ~~gene~~ nucleic acid is operably linked to a promoter.
22. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 21, wherein said promoter is constitutive.
23. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 21, wherein said promoter is inducible.
24. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 21, wherein said promoter is tissue specific.
- 25 – 26. (Canceled)
27. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~26~~ 34, wherein said ~~transformation~~ introducing is effected by *Agrobacterium tumerfaciens*.
28. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~26~~ 34, wherein said ~~gene~~ nucleic acid is operably linked to a promoter.
29. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 28, wherein said promoter is constitutive.

30. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 28, wherein said promoter is inducible.
31. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 28, wherein said promoter is tissue specific.
32. (New) A method of increasing a tolerance to a drought-stress condition in a plant, the method comprising the steps of:
 - a) providing a plant in a native state;
 - b) providing an expression vector, said vector comprising a nucleic acid having the nucleotide sequence SEQ. ID. NO:1;
 - c) introducing said vector into said plant to create a transformed plant;
 - d) exposing said transformed plant and said native-state plant to said drought-stress condition under conditions wherein said expression product stimulates a higher expression of a drought-tolerance gene in said transformed plant, and said transformed plant, relative to said native-state plant, is drought-tolerant.
33. (New) The method of Claim 32, wherein said expression product in said transformed plant, relative to said native-state plant, is increased at least 2-fold within 24 hours of such exposure.
34. (New) A method of increasing a tolerance to a cold-stress condition in a plant, the method comprising the steps of:
 - a) providing a plant in a native state;
 - b) providing an expression vector, said vector comprising a nucleic acid having the nucleotide sequence SEQ. ID. NO:1;
 - c) introducing said vector into said plant to create a transformed plant, and
 - d) exposing said transformed plant and said native-state plant to said cold-stress condition under conditions wherein said expression product stimulates a higher expression of a cold-tolerance gene in said transformed plant, and said transformed plant, relative to said native-state plant, is cold-tolerant.

35. (New) The method of Claim 34, wherein said expression product in said transformed plant, relative to said native-state plant, is increased at least 2-fold within 24 hours of such exposure.
36. (New) The method of Claim 32, wherein said drought-tolerance gene in said transformed plant, relative to said native plant, is increased at least 2-fold within 24 hours of such exposure.
37. (New) The method of Claim 34, wherein said cold-tolerance gene in said transformed plant, relative to said native plant, is increased at least 2-fold within 24 hours of such exposure.